

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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R 152240Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9116
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5702

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: ROLDOS' PARTNERS UNDER FIRE

1. THE MOST AVIDLY PURSUED POLITICAL GAME IN TOWN DURING THIS NON-CAMPAIGN INTERVAL IN THE RETORNO PROCESS HAS BEEN TO QUESTION JAIME ROLDOS'S BACKGROUND, POLITICAL VIEWS AND CHOICE OF COMPANIONS. THE LATTER OF THESE, BOTH ASSAD BUCARAM ON THE ONE HAND AND THE POPULAR DEMOCRACY (DP) PARTY ON THE OTHER, CONTINUE TO DO AND SAY THINGS (OR AT LEAST ARE REPORTED TO) WHICH DO NOT MAKE HIS CHALLENGE ANY LESS. AN INTERVIEW WITH DP HEAD JULIO CESAR TRUJILLO, CARRIED IN THE AUGUST 14 GUAYAQUIL DAILY EXPRESO, FEATURED THE HEADLINE: "POPULAR DEMOCRACY IS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT: J.C. TRUJILLO PROPOSES A RADICAL SUBSTITUTION OF STRUCTURE". THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW WAS MARKEDLY LESS CONTROVERSIAL AND CERTAINLY DID NOT JUSTIFY SUCH A HEADLINE. NONETHELESS, MANY POLITICAL FIGURES HAVE A TENDENCY TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN READ HEADLINES. THUS, EMBOFFS HAVE ALREADY HEARD COMMENTS FROM CONSERVATIVE

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PARTY PRESIDENT RAFAEL ARMIJOS AND OTHERS TO THE EFFECT THAT TRUJILLO'S RESPONSES ARE "PURE COMMUNISM".

2. AT THE SAME TIME, ASSAD BUCARAM CONTINUES TO MAKE COMMENTS WHICH MAKE EVEN MORE CRITICAL THE EXTENT OF INFLUENCE HE WOULD HAVE IN A ROLDOS GOVERNMENT. HE REPORTEDLY ACCUSED, ON A LOCAL GUAYAQUIL RADIO PROGRAM,

THE BANK OF GUAYAQUIL OF BEING A NEST OF USURERS. BANK PRESIDENT (AND SIXTO DURAN'S BROTHER) CESAR DURAN-BALLEN APPEARED ON TELEVISION ON AUGUST 14 TO EXPRESS HIS "CONSTERNATION" OVER THE ACCUSATION. DURAN QUESTIONED HOW A BANK THAT EMPLOYED JAIME'S BROTHER, LEON ROLDOS AGUILERA, AND FOR WHICH JAIME HIMSELF DID OCCASIONAL LEGAL WORK COULD POSSIBLY BE USUROUS. HE ALLOWED THAT HE WAS CERTAIN THAT JAIME DID NOT AGREE WITH BUCARAM'S DESCRIPTION AND CHALLENGED HIM TO MAKE HIS POSITION CLEAR.

3. COMMENT: OF MORE CONCERN THAN CONTINUED ACCUSATIONS THAT ROLDOS'S PARTNERS IN THE DP ARE COMMUNISTS, ARE BUCARAM'S CONTINUED PROVOCATIVE REMARKS. HIS CONTENTIOUS AND CRITICAL COMMENTS ARE REACHING A POINT WHERE ROLDOS WILL HAVE TO EITHER DISOWN OR MUZZLE HIM. THE FIRST WOULD BE POLITICAL SUICIDE FOR ROLDOS AND THE SECOND IS PROBABLY IMPOSSIBLE. AS EXPECTED, ONE OF THE MAJOR ISSUES OF THE SECOND ROUND CAMPAIGN WILL NO DOUBT BE ROLDOS' RELATIONSHIP WITH BUCARAM, AND WHILE INDICATIONS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COULD ACTUALLY IMPROVE ROLDOS' STANDING WITH THE ELECTORATE AND THE MILITARY, EITHER TOO LARGE A BREACH OR TOO TEPID A REACTION IN THE FACE OF BUCARAM'S MAVERICK DEMAGOGUERY COULD HARM ROLDOS.
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